

Seven Insights to Success

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As Golden Key members looked through their conference programs, one could hear the soft murmurs of “Who is Marshall Goldsmith?” Although Marshall’s complete bio was distributed to all of the 2005 Golden Key International Conference delegates, not many attendees, if any, had heard of Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, renowned executive coach, prominent speaker and author of a multitude of books and articles on leadership, prior to this weekend.

Perhaps because Marshall was not well known, not much was expected from his presentation to the group of spirited young honor students. On Saturday, August 13, 2005, almost 800 conference attendees sat in a packed hall at the Westin Century Plaza hotel in Los Angeles, looking on stage at a smiling and docile, gray-haired, older man who could easily pass for one’s grandfather but, in just a few minutes, was about to amaze everyone.



MARSHALL GOLDSMITH AT THE 2005 GOLDEN KEY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

Marshall spoke of success. Not his, but theirs, and not just what they have already achieved, but their future success. He talked about what he did as an executive coach and as the foremost authority on leadership. The presentation was titled “Helping Successful Leaders Get Even Better.” Although most of the time this workshop is directed to leaders in the workforce, it proved both useful and helpful to the chapter and university leaders who sat in the audience. The presentation provided members with tips that they could use today. He urged members to learn what to avoid while learning what they should do. Using interactive, dynamic activities, he encouraged members to think, ask and then speak. Although Marshall was on stage, as a member of his audience, it seemed like he was speaking directly to you.

A thunderous applause concluded the workshop, and this unknown, gray-haired man became a superstar. Onlookers may have thought that a famous LA celebrity was in the room with all of the autographs and pictures being taken. But no, it was just Marshall Goldsmith, doing what he does best: encouraging those around him to find themselves and be motivated by what lies within each one of them.

Attendees left with words of praise and comments, such as “Marshall Goldsmith was clearly the best part of the entire conference, without a doubt”; “Marshall’s wit, wisdom and humanity made a deep impression on me”; “Marshall Goldsmith’s presentation was AWESOME!!!”; and “Marshall Goldsmith’s presentation ROCKED!!! One of the best speakers Golden Key has had in years!!!”

This year, we are also proud to have Dr. Marshall Goldsmith as the *CONCEPTS* cover person. Marshall is as impressed with Golden Key as our members are with him. Taking the time to speak with each conference attendee vying for his attention, Marshall became a beacon of inspiration and motivation for hungry students, eager to partake of a piece of the working world that will soon be theirs.

I, too, was fortunate enough to meet Marshall at the conference and to speak with him more in depth for this article.

About 10 minutes into the interview, I admitted to him that I felt as though I was growing professionally from our phone call. Marshall has a way of making you feel that way. It is not only the knowledge that he imparts, but also the way in which it is delivered. With a consistently calming voice and an infectious laugh, you know that you have his undivided attention and that he has yours.

As an executive coach, such a relationship is critical to success by both parties. What exactly is an executive coach? “It is a very popular field right now but has been dramatically increasing in utilization and has evolved over time. It was originally called 360 degree feedback, not called coaching then. The purpose was to develop follow-up systems to help executives and company leaders get better. This has evolved into executive coaching.”

Marshall’s path to becoming a leader, mentor and coach was one, I guess you could say, of being in the right place at the right time. As he put it, “Others can open the door for you, but once the door is open, you have to be prepared, willing and able to step up.” While studying for his Ph.D. at UCLA, Marshall met Paul Hersey, an executive educator who taught Marshall to do what he did. “Paul was probably the highest paid leadership development professional in the United States. He was a great teacher, and I learned from him. On one occasion, Paul’s schedule was booked. He needed help and asked me to fill in. At the time, where I was working, I was being paid \$15,000 a year. Paul paid me \$1,000 just for that day.” From this beginning experience, Marshall urges others to find great people and learn from them. Along the way, you have to pay your dues, but look at where Marshall is today.

Marshall’s knowledge and services do not come cheap. At a rate of \$17,000 for a speaking session and approximately \$200,000 for one-on-one personal executive coaching, Marshall currently has a 6-month waiting list. I immediately asked how I could get started in this industry. Of course, he told me to do exactly what he did, learn from the best. “Find the person who is great at whatever industry you are in and learn from the start with suc-

successful people who you admire." It sounds simple enough.

As most college students can't afford a personal coach, Marshall has provided several keys of information and advice for students making the transition from academics to the real world. "This is the transition from theory to practice. The first key is the importance of application. Poor execution of a great idea will not lead to the best results. It is not necessary to be right, but to engage people to getting the final outcome desired." Marshall notes, "Decisions are made on one variable, and that is who has the power to make the decision. You have to learn how to influence people. It is important to achieve results rather than win academic points because, in the real world, winning points is meaningless."

Advice for personal and professional success from Marshall is simple. One of the most critical imperatives is "building relationships. In academia, relationships may be disconnected from success. Relationships are separate. But in the working world, leadership, selling, interacting with clients, etc., are all areas where one needs to build relationships. In school, the entire currency is ideas, but in the professional world, your currency is relationships, which may be more important than ideas. Your competition may have the same idea, but if you have the relationships, then you win."

Golden Key members are able to benefit greatly from the networking connection offered by Marshall. Starting early on and learning the techniques of coaching will provide for greater advancements when facing peers years down the road. There is a lifelong learning value that can be instilled if starting earlier in one's life. Marshall encourages college and university students to start along this path of learning while in college. "Begin learning from everyone around you. Members of teams, workgroups, organizations, etc. Take on highly recommended leadership roles while in college, and ask for input about your leadership skills. Learn from everyone around you. Then, once you enter the workforce and begin working as part of a team, learn there as well. Hone your skills for influencing up. Be a good team member, and influence your team."

Several of Marshall's tips are included within his "Seven Insights."

1) Work hard to get to know the best in your field. Surround yourself with them,

and learn from them.

2) Find an area of interest that is unique and special; become an expert in that topic. Know exactly what you do and don't do.

3) Discover your identity; then, build a clear, specific and unique career around that.

4) Make professional colleagues your friends, not competitors; the more allies you have, the better.

5) Always know who your customers are. Realize that communication is your responsibility, not theirs.

6) When selling or influencing others,

always try to give people more than they expect. You will be amazed how frequently they will want to give things back to you.

7) Build your personal brand. Realize that this is a long-term investment in your life.

Even with the large fees, Marshall is eager to share his knowledge, information and experiences freely, in every sense of the word. Marshall has created a resource for all who wish to learn from him at no charge. Golden Key members can access videos, articles, excerpts and more at www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com. ●



MARSHALL BEING INDUCTED AS AN HONORARY MEMBER.



MARSHALL AND SEVERAL NEW FANS AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.